IUJ Alumni News

A Newsletter for the 5,227 IUJ Alumni 145 countries and territories 1985-2023

January 2024, The 58th Edition

https://www.iuj.ac.jp/alumni/newsletter/

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- **Gretchen's** Reflections as her Retirement Approaches



A picture by Pramodhya Dissanayake (Clicks by Pramo) - MBA 2024

Let's start the new year with some Alumni Showcases from around the world....



Alumni Shortlisted for Nobel Peace Prize

In October 2023, campus and alumni around the world were closely watching the Nobel Peace Prize announcement in the category of Human Rights, as one of our own was on the short list: **Kyaw Moe Tun** (MBA 2004, Myanmar), Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations and the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC). Though the award went to another amazing person, this recognition makes IUJ proud or our alum and his on-going work.

Microfinance Consultant Supporting People in Indonesia

Ikatri Meynar Sihombing (IDP2002) is a Commissioner at Bina Artha Ventura, a micro-financing firm in the model of Grameen Bank of Bangladesh. She also holds positions as Co-Founder of Digital Waste Solutions, and as Advisory Coordinator at Root Capital.



Meynar has over 20 years of experience, including several years in the microfinance sector and Small Medium Enterprises (SME) development with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Mercy Corps. After leaving her position as the CEO of MICRA in 2009, she leverages her work and interests in energy sufficiency and environmental preservation for grassroots people in under-served areas. Meynar is currently working independently at a professional think-thank in microfinance promoting financial education and customer protection, technology and innovative products to facilitate access to finance for many individuals who are excluded from the formal financial system in Indonesia.

Sources: https://bina-artha.com/about-us/
https://www.linkedin.com/in/ikatri-meynar-sihombing-24239710/

Multiple Ambassadorial Posts



Sasiwat Wongsinsawat (IR1991, Thailand) is current serving as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Russian Federation, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Ambassador Wongsinsawat joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1988. He has held various positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs including Deputy Director-General, Department of South Asian, Middle East and African Affairs (2013-2016), and Minister, Permanent Mission of Thailand to the UN Office in Geneva (2016-2018). Prior to his assignment in Moscow, he served as Director-General, Department of European Affairs (2018-2020).

Used with permissions from https://moscow.thaiembassy.org/en/page/76265-ambassador?menu=5d843dba15e39c1abc005769

Multiple Ambassadorial Posts 2



Ian Walcott (IR1996), still our only alum from Barbados, continues to add countries to his list of ambassadorial appointments. He was recently appointed as Ambassador to Columbia making the list include 8 jurisictions: All of Central America, Mexico and Colombia. In the photo, he is presenting his credentials to President Gustavo Petro of Colombia in early November 2023.



TWO Alumni are Ministers in Cambodia

IUJ is proud to have alumni in two key ministerial posts in Cambodia. **Rottanak Keo** (IDP 1999), photo right) is the Minister of Mines and Energy, and **Vanndy Hem** (IDP 2002, photo left) is the Minister of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation.

Congratulations Gentlemen

Special Award Achieved



Inna Dariwardani (PMPP 2012, Indonesia), with her team, won first prize for their paper in the category of Regional Economic Modelling Paper at the **East Java Economic (EJAVEC) Forum** 2023

The paper is entitled *INTEGRATING ESTIMATION OF INFLATION THRESHOLD AND NOWCASTING REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH USING CLASSICAL, MACHINE LEARNING, AND ENSEMBLE METHOD*

Congratulations to Inna and her team!



Alumni Shachos!



Hiroshi Shichiku, Class of 1993 (right) is now CEO of Shikoku Instrumentation after a long career with Shikoku Electric Power. **Shuji Inaba**, Class of 1997 (left), recently became President of NTT Smart Trade Inc. This appointment is after a long and diverse career within the many NTT companies.

Above Photo credts: https://www.nttsmarttrade.co.jp/company_info/#company_info_2 and https://miraicolabo.willsmart.co.jp/article/1693/

Conference Speakers

Hazel Baliatan (IDP 2008) recently represented her country, The Philippines, at UNDP Eurasia at a the SDG Global Conference. She reported in that another IUJ was also on the same panel, coincidentally. Who is the mystery alum!??!





Global Meeting Participation

Thiphasone Soukhathammavong, IDP2006 from Lao, participates in the 21st ASEAN-Japan High Level Officials Meeting on Caring Societies, in Japan, in November. He is with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Laos as Deputy Director General of Planning and International Cooperation Department.

Welcome Back to Campus!

These alumni came for alumni networking events, career talks, special lectures, workshops, and teaching on our Non-Degree Programs. Thank you!



Mahendra Singh, (MBA05, Cuo Univ.), taught in a Non-Degree Program



Andy Laver (MBA04, LIXIL Co/Sato Toilets), shared career advice



Tadashi Inagaki, (MBA95), gave caligraphy and pottery workshops



Nakano-san (MBA90 and Alumni EC Chair) and Yaoyu-san (MBA95, EC Vice Chair) attended graduation.



Paul Consalvi (IR91, U. Tokyo) is helping the revived Entreneurs' Club, and will be a judge for the HULT competition



Raja Timilsina (IDP11, ADBI) gave a special lecture “Waste management and intergenerational sustainability dilemma in Nepal”



Ligang Song (IR85, ANU) came to campus and talked to students about pursuing an academic career, and how to prepare for a PhD program.



Jack Chia, Class of 1989, suprised Gretchen in November after 35 years!



Lisa Nguyen (IDP2021, ADBI), **Azman Hafid** (MBA2022, Rakuten), and **Pooja Yadav** (MBA2022, Nissan Motor Co.) joined students on-campus for a Career Networking event co-hosted by IUJ Career Services and the Alumni Association EC. More career talks were offered online by **Dieu Linh Ngo** (Ebiz2018, Nomura Securities) and **Prasun Agrawal** (Ebiz2019, AWL, Inc).



Introducing IUJ President T. Kikkawa

Dear IUJ Alumni,

I would like to extend my heartfelt greetings to all of you in various parts of the world.

My name is Takeo Kikkawa, and I became the president in September 2023. My specialty is the Japanese energy industry, and I have been appointed as a professor at GSIM in 2020.

At IUJ, 374 students from 69 countries and regions are studying hard day and night to follow in your footsteps. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors and look forward to your continued support for IUJ.

Review of IUJ Alumni Association Executive Council Activities: 2021-23

*At the December 21 2023 IUJ Bonenkai, current Alumni Association Executive Council Chair, M**itsuharu Nakano**-san (MBA90, CEO, SilverRay Capital) gave the following report.*



To view the slides shared at Bonenkai that go along with this report, please see https://www.iuj.ac.jp/alumni-f/newsletter/pdf/21-23Review.pdf

Over the past 3 years, the current members of the EC have made efforts to enrich campus-alumni relations, and further engage alumni around the world. By hosting the Tokyo IUJ Friday, along with cities in about 30 other countries, and arranging the yearly Bonenkai we brought people together. Several EC members, and other alumni joined in the campus-created event with IUJ's 40th anniversary events "Leadership in Times of Uncertainty and Change." Also as part of these celebrations and on behalf of all the alumni world-wide, we made a donation to IUJ after approval at the 2022 Bonenkai. This earned the Association a bubble on the Alumni Donor Wall featured in the tunnels on campus along with other that have donated to IUJ.

Our monthly online meetings featured discussions on what the EC and alumni worldwide can give back to IUJ. To help the discussions several staff and faculty were invited to participate. This resulted in action and future planning for career networking help, an alumni lecture series at Musubiba College for Uonuma local people, BBQ events to bring students, alumni and the community together, pottery and calligraphy workshops for students, International Women's Day celebrations and women's mentoring program meetings, and the like.

The EC sent members to IUJ Welcome Day, International Festival and graduation when COVID protocols allowed.

It has been a fairly productive 3 year term, and a good foundation to build further in the next term from April 2024 - to March 2027. I, and other continuing EC members, look forward to working with the newly joining ECers for further activities. Your ideas and support are key to further success. Please be involved.

Slides for the Above Presentation



Bonenkai 2023 attracted alumni from the first batch of graduates in 1985, **Masataka Jo** (left), to the most recent graduated in 2023 **Laurence Kwek**! They are posing here with IUJ IUJ Vice President and GSIR Acting Dean, Kato-sensei.

Our wonderful group of IUJ Alumni at Bonenkai 2023!

See you in 2024?



For many more photos, including Carol coming in from Korea, IUJ's new president Kikkawa-sensei and more more more, see https://www.facebook.com/groups/WeLoveIUJ

EC SlideShow

Click for new EC Members Slideshow

New EC Members Introductions

We are exciting to introduce to you the incoming Executive Council members of the IUJ Alumni Association.

First, please let me say a warm THANK YOU to those that have served from April 2021 - March 2024. With COVID19 offering many challenges, the EC members were able to do interesting things online taking advantage of the new situation.



New EC Member SlideShow

Our incoming group features more women on the EC than ever before. Both in Japan and overseas, the new members have ideas for how to strengthen IUJ Alumni Relations with

each other, and with campus. They have ideas in how to better promote IUJ in small and big ways. To view what they are interested in and their action ideas, please see the PDF slideshow, shared at the 2023 Bonenkai, as part of the "election."

Please join our new and continuing leaders to help strengthen our network and interactivity like never before.

Please see the SlideShow for names, classes, affiliations, and motivation for the EC (you can pretend you are hearing GSO-EC election speeches!). Yellow indicates continuing members. White frames indicate new members. https://www.iuj.ac.jp/alumni-f/newsletter/pdf/ECSlides.pdf

Special thanks to our outgoing members including:
Rakib Mahmood, MBA 1997
Yukiko Nozaki, MBA 2003
Daniel Bukenya, MEB 2008
Priyanshu Sharma, MBA 2011
Denis Desjardins, MBA 2011
Akiyo HIgaki, MA 2017

From Business Analyst to Music Therapist:
Milly Ng (MBA2001) Shares her Journey



Music has always been a part of my life. It is my source of energy. It brings me friends. Music has been a blessing for me.

Now it is my turn to bring this blessing to others. I am in my 2nd year of studies in the master's program of Music Therapy in University of West England and hopefully will become a qualified music therapist in 2025.

My family moved from Hong Kong to Bristol, UK in 2020. After graduating from IUJ, I worked as an IT consultant in Tokyo and Shanghai and subsequently a business analyst / project manager in a financial institution in Hong Kong. In the workplace I learned to put feelings aside and prioritize professionalism. Studying music therapy is a big shift for me from focusing on productivity and profits to feelings and well-being.

What is Music therapy?

It is a form of intervention that utilizes music to address physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs of individuals. Through joint music improvisation, mutual trust is built between the client and the therapist. This therapeutic relationship becomes the foundation for the client's growth in his or her own unique way. In my first year of placement I worked with an autistic child who was quite isolated from other children in school. In music therapy sessions, we explored a variety of musical instruments as shown in the photo. The child played and sang freely and I responded with music to support him. Over a few months, these shared musical moments allowed him to find meaning in interaction with another individual.



Subsequently he started engaging with other children.

Now that I come to think about it, music has again brought me the blessing of reconnecting with my own feelings, and connecting with others in a special and deep way which is beyond words.

Business Connections: Continuing Education in Management Topics

Naresh Makhijani (MBA93) is CEO of OTI International in Indonesia. OTI is a management and IT consultancy with a 23-year track record.

Naresh has 37 years of work experience in 14 countries and does webinars on various areas of management including Balanced Scorecard, Digital Transformation, Aligning HR to Strategy, etc.

Those who are interested can find him on LinkedIn at https://www.linkedin.com/in/naresh-makhijani-41a5491/
Or email him at naresh.makhijani@otiinternational.com



Naresh would like to invite IUJ alumni to join his new LinkedIn group: ***Organization Alignment and Diagnostics***. Here, the goal is to create a space to exchange ideas and discuss keys and tools for aligning organizations to become more productive and profitable. He will cover a variety of topics, such as Strategic Alignment, Customer Retention, Customer Engagement, Employee Engagement, Processes, Culture-Building, Leadership and so much more.

If that sounds important to you, please accept the invitation and we can learn from each other https://www.linkedin.com/groups/14115285

His next webinars are planned as follows:



1. Organization Diagnostics - 30th Jan. 10 AM Jakarta time
2. Enterprise Risk Management - 22nd Feb. 10 AM Jakarta time



Reflections: Featuring My Least Favorite Question

Gretchen Shinoda (IR89, and IUJ employee 1994 to 2024) shares her thoughts and experience at IUJ.

I am a unique IUJ graduate. And I love the role.

Many of you have asked me about my retirement plans, and shared your memories with me in the process. I wanted to take the opportunity of my last Alumni Newsletter as a full-time IUJ staffer to share some thoughts with you. **I hope you do not mind!**

I came to IUJ as the wife of a student in 1985. I was one of 3 white women in the entire valley! While playing tennis and basketball, and even soccer, not to mention singing in the IUJ Band, I got to meet many of the first batch of alumni, and all of the 2nd batch who graduated in 1986. I studied with IUJers from the classes of 1987-1989 and call ALL of you my classmates. My husband and I left IUJ in 1989 – Miyagawa-san drove me to the station with tears flowing down my cheeks. I thought I would never return.

Tomohito and I then experienced being alumni overseas from June 1989 to October 1994, when we were then asked to return to IUJ with the presidency of Dr. George R. Packard. It was our honor.

I started working at IUJ with the glamorous title of *Special Assistant to the President* (Packard-sensei), and he asked me to solve troubles and make campus life more fun. We had movie nights with popcorn, tennis tournaments, language circles, etc. It was quite fun.

Then in 1995, Dr. Packard asked me to start IUJ Alumni Relations and IUJ Career Services. After learning from IUJ's partner universities in the USA – namely Tuck and SAIS, plus my alma mater, Lewis and Clark, I went to work with the help of many to create an alumni database and online directory, various alumni services such as the newsletter, IUJ Fridays, Alumni Chapters, Ambassadors Program, mentor programs, etc. The Career Counseling and Services program was complete with workshops and coaching, a Resume Book unique to Japan, and on campus recruiting – bucking the traditional recruiting strategies and timing of Japan to meet IUJers' needs.

Pioneering these programs based on how US universities do them was a special experience here.

When Dr. Packard left IUJ in 1997, I created the Packard Fund to provide IUJ goods, mostly T-shirts, for purchase – a labor of love! Dr. Packard donated the seed money for the fund, and I order shirts, sell them, put the money back into the fund, and start again. The fund is still going strong!

In 2009, IUJ asked me to add managing the Office of Student Services to my roles. With the number of students growing, specifically non-Japanese, this presented another challenge. Even before this time, student and campus issues were coming to me in increasing number. One issue I addressed with Tamaru-sensei was harassment: Power, Academic and Sexual harassment. Together we created IUJ's Professional Ethics Committee, PEC, in 2006 after 1.5 years of research in how to address issues in such a unique environment IUJ presents where cultural, religious or "common sense" shared values do not necessarily contribute to addressing such issues.

With so many hats to wear, and being a bit burnt out on career services (you can only correct so many resumes!), I asked for more time to focus on students services and alumni relations. Career Services thus went to two amazing people in the new Office of Admissions and Career Services. Student issues require most of my time. Working with professionals from over 70 countries and with all their stories is both rewarding and overwhelming: from the loss of parents to discoveries of pregnancies, from celebrating a thesis defense to getting angry about not separating garbage correctly, from hearing of fears of academic failure to winning a scholarship – there have been a lot of hugs!

But, getting to focus exclusively on Alumni Relations has never been possible. I love serving our network more than anything. Bringing people together, helping them network, and adding leverage to that network is exciting. Finding lost alumni is quite rewarding! Following your careers makes me proud. I am hopeful I can continue even after March 2024.

SO WHAT IS THAT QUESTION you do not like, Gretchen?

Throughout these 30 years, I have been asked so many interesting questions, and been presented with so many challenges I do not know where to begin. I often say なんでもあり国際大学。“IUJ – where anything can happen.” But I wanted to share a few of them including my LEAST favorite question of all.

Of course, questions of “where can I buy an adapter for my computer,” “Which brand of shampoo do you recommend?” “How do I call overseas?” etc. are normal. But here are a few whoppers I will never forget.

Why didn’t Citibank offer me the job? I really think I was most qualified among those that interviewed today.

My answer: Because you told the Citibank recruiter that you would never work for an American company.

My resume looks wonderful in the Resume Book, but I am not getting any job interviews. Why not?

My answer: You need to apply to the openings noted on the career board to let them know you are interested. You cannot expect the company to find you – do the work for them!

1:30am – pounding on my SD3 apartment:

Gretchen, my passport has expired? What do I do?

My answer: Come see me in the morning at the office. There is nothing I can do at 1:30am.

I just bought a bed off Amazon and it was delivered in pieces. Will you please come build my bed?

My answer: I have no idea. Please ask someone in your community to help.

It is raining. Can the OSS lend me an umbrella?

My answer: Well….. I guess you can take one from the Lost and Found.

What? You want me to give you a poop sample in order for me to get to cook for Open Day?

My answer: I know… it is rather awkward, but required (It isn’t any more by the way!). And that wasn’t even my least favorite question…

My least favorite question of all is . . .

Gretchen, who are IUJ's Successful Alumni? Please make me a list.
My answer: How can I make such a list? Our alumni are amazing people and I have no idea how to assess who is "more successful" than others.

You, IUJ Alumni, are truly amazing people. First, you found your way to this campus we call home. You worked for 1-2 years so hard in such diversity, making it to the finish line we call graduation. You have carried the IUJ spirit into your various careers. You find each other at business negotiation tables in Australia, on airplanes headed for a Maldives crisis meeting, at environmental and SDG panel discussions for Eurasia. You work with each other from roles with Japan's MOFA and Vietnam development organizations. You have helped establish Japanese firms overseas in India, Cambodia, Vietnam, and more. You discover an IUJer in Fiji where you are there to discuss Asia-Pacific issues and see someone wearing an IUJ T-shirt. The examples go on.

We boast CEOs of major corporations and small, growing startups. We have Ambassadors and government ministers and parliament politicians among our ranks. We have university faculty and elementary school teachers helping the next generations. We have UN junior staff starting their careers, leaders of major UN and other world organizations from Haiti to Mozambique to Iraq, and UNHQ Permanent Mission Ambassadors in New York. We have non-Japanese working well in Japanese companies and Japanese working in consulting firms and international organizations around the world. We have a Nobel Peace Prize finalist and winners of multiple top business and CFO awards. We have journalists covering regional and world news, and those featured in their articles. We have stay-at-home parents and now even grandparents raising the next generation. We have survivors of war zones, natural disasters, major illnesses and a pandemic – and we have lost alumni to these as well: I have had to say goodbye to 46 IUJers from the classes of 1985 to 2023 - Each one harder than the next.

Each world event, good and bad, finds IUJers involved. Many reach out to me with heartbreaking or inspiring stories *and* requests. The trust many of you have shown in me is humbling, and my inability to meet all your expectations is agonizing. Hopefully, I have helped more than I have disappointed.

So how can I say who our successful alumni are, when you are all out there doing amazing things every day? You are all heroes, retired and up-and-coming stars, survivors and creators. It is an honor to call you part of my family.

IUJ: Where the World Gathers*
IUJ Alumni: Gathering Around the World**

**I am proud to have been on the team of 3 that created this slogan*
***This one is all mine. I think it is fun*

SO, what are you going to do in retirement?
MANY of you have asked, so please let me share: I have a bucket list I cannot wait to start on.

For fun, I want to . . .
- Clean my house! Mari Kondo is inspiring.
- Cook for my husband who has been the chef our entire marriage of 39 years

· Swim a lot, walk a lot, and do those bungee jump workouts at the gym!
  o Teaching elderly people at the pool HOW to swim – teaching swimming is a passion
· Write 2 children's books that have been in my mind for years
  o Learn to draw to illustrate them too
· Write a book with my daughter on raising a bilingual, bicultural kid in the countryside of Japan – my experience AND hers (we are asked all the time about this)
· Live on Sado Island and help with the World Heritage bid for a few months.
· Go to Malaysia to help the Orangutans – This should be at the TOP of my list, but it is expensive.
· Play the piano again
· Play golf again
· Travel and scuba dive again
· Go fishing
· Sit in the forest and breath
· Do puzzles and crafts (I have SO many project ideas)
· Make my yard nice – flowers, grass and veggie garden

Professionally, I want to . . .
· Connect IUJ Alumni better and deeper
· Help Japanese young people get to overseas university or international work experiences with resume building, essay development, interview skills and finding the right university/organization for their goals
· Provide public speaking workshops: from developing the presentation content and image to delivery in English
· Translate menus, Japanese Inn guides or signs, website content, tourist spot signs, hospital and clinics, etc. to help Niigata better welcome or work with Non-Japanese tourist and residents (IUJers and beyond)
· Work with Sado Island in their bid to become a World Heritage Site, and more well-known tourism destination
· Maybe help IUJers again with career workshops and career coaching – I love that kind of work!
· Maybe help some of your companies with special short-term projects.

Thank you IUJers.
Let's see where the road takes us next. And please, STAY CONNECTED.



Alumni Donations Making a Difference

Along with the Alumni Donors Wall to honor the alumni who have made financial donations back to IUJ (located in the hallways between the classroom and cafeteria), IUJ has posted a plaque in our new and improved classroom. Alumni Donations helped with high tech projectors and screens.

To those that donated, **we thank you!**

ふるさと納税 and other Donation Options here

For those in Japan

For those in USA

For those anywhere in the World

In Memory of . . .

Oyetunde Osoba
November 1979 - May 2023,
Class of 2023



Eddie Zormelo
May 1959 - December 2023,
Class of 1989



Bocar Ballo
May 1991 - December 2023,
Class of 2021





IUJ Worldwide Friday - The Tradition Continues...

Thanks to our chapter leaders around the world, IUJ Friday 2023 was another great success. Over 300 IUJers said a big KAMPAI to IUJ.

2024 will be better than ever. Mark your calendar and be involved: **September 6, 2024**

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